United States Patent [19]

Ryan

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[54] **DEVICE FOR ONE-HANDED GENERATION OF ALPHA-NUMBERIC CHARACTERS**

[76] Inventor: **Terry Ryan,** 2097 Maynard Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3K 3T3

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation of Ser. No. 105,727, Oct. 7, 1987, abandoned, which is a continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 809,259, Dec. 16, 1985, abandoned.

[30] **Foreign Application Priority Data**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **400/100;** 400/485

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 400/87, 89, 91, 100, 400/101, 102, 485, 486, 489; 178/17 A, 17 C, 118; 340/365 R, 365 VL; 434/112, 113, 114

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Primary Examiner—David A. Wiecking
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—James W. Hellwege

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A device for one-handed generation of alpha-numeric characters in an alpha or numeric mode including letters, numerals, punctuation marks and mathematical function symbols is provided, comprising a finger key section comprising a first array of four finger keys and a second array of four finger keys, respective keys of said first and second arrays arranged in adjacent pairs, said finger keys each operable individually to generate a single character at a time, said first array of finger keys in an alpha mode assigned to the generation of all of the consonants and said second array of finger keys in an alpha mode being assigned to the generation of all of the vowels, one of said arrays in a numeric mode being assigned to the generation of numerals and mathematical symbols, a thumb key section comprising at least one array of four thumb keys, said thumb keys of said array in an alpha mode assigning said first array of finger keys to the generation of consonants and in a numeric mode assigning to one of said arrays the generation of numerals 0–9 and mathematical symbols, with each of the thumb keys of said at least one array operable to assign a preselected group of characters to said finger keys with the groups of characters to which the respective finger keys are assigned being arranged sequentially in alphabetical or numerical order and thumb-operated control key means comprising a plurality of said thumb keys initiating either said alpha or numeric mode, and means responsive to the operation of said keys for generating signals representing a particular alpha-numeric character.

7 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets